WHITE VIOLETS

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WHITE VIOLETS.

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WHITE VIOLETS.

"In the mossy dell, by the crystal brook,
There I know full well for violets to look.
There, hidden in leaves of darkest green,
The soft, white violet buds are seen."

SO sang little Effie, as, with a bounding step, she passed over a low wall which divided the green meadows, with their hedges of blooming hawthorn, from a long, narrow lane.

The trees, in their earliest green, met overhead; the sky was blue, and a little streamlet murmured gently over the pebbles at the side of the narrow road. As Effie entered this pretty lane she walked slower, and stopped

her song to listen to the little birds, though their singing was scarcely so merry as her own. Who so happy as Effie on this bright May morn! for ah, had not the good Village Dame, who kept the school for all the boys and girls in the village, had she not given a whole holiday to her little pupils? and had she not also promised the important sum of one shilling to the one that brought her home the greatest number of violets, white in particular? for dearly the old lady loved violets, and she knew the little folks would have a pleasant time seeking in the fields for those sweet little buds of spring.

The little Village Fair was to be held on the morrow, and the idea of having a shilling to spend, caused many a young heart to beat quickly.

Little Effie was very hopeful that the pleasure might be hers, for she had long watched a small plot of violet leaves, nearly hidden by the long grass; they were in this very lane, and she knew they would be all in full bloom by this day; and still more she knew they were all white — white as snow, and their soft, sweet fragrance already scented the cool breeze that parted the curls on her sunburnt forehead. In another minute she stood before the

plot, but divided from it by the little brook. She sat down on the bank for a moment to look about her. A little squirrel ran along on the wall, and then stopped to chatter a good morning to her; the lambs were playing and racing in the fields, and the birds were singing overhead.

Little Effie now took off her shoes and stockings, and wading through the little stream, in an instant she was on the soft grass and picking the little white buds, counting them eagerly. "Ten, twelve,—why," said she, "with what I have already got, I am sure of the shilling.

"Now I may think of what I should like best. I should like a doll, but a work-box would be more useful to me, and with the money I have saved I could just buy one. Let me see — yes — or a basket, perhaps." And still thinking of what she should buy, little Effie sat down and began tying up her violets with the long grass that grew by the brook.

"Poor Robin," said she, "I am sorry for him; I know he is so very anxious for the prize, and I am sure I shall gain it."

Now I must tell you that little Effie was a very good little girl; every one loved her, she was so obliging and good-natured; the good school-mistress hoped that Effie would win the promised shilling, for she knew the child would spend it properly.

Effie was aroused by a rustling noise near her, and turning around she saw her little friend and playmate, curly-headed Robin, coming up the bank, evidently in search of the very violets she had in her own basket. Effie felt sorry, for she knew how vexed Robin would be; still she could not help being glad she had got them.

She did not speak, but in a moment he saw her and the violets.

"Effie! O Effie! you have taken them all — all my violets, that I have watched for the last week!"

"Your violets!" said Effie; "they were never yours! and if it comes to that, Robin, I have been in the lane every morning for a fortnight."

"O, of course they are yours now," said Robin; "you get everything, and you are always the teacher's favorite."

"O Robin, do not say that! you know very well she treats us all fairly. I dare say there are more violets up the lane; come, I will help you search."

"No, thank you," said Robin, sulkily; "I shall not look for more." He sat down on the bank, and was silent.

Effie stood by him, smelling her violets and in deep thought; then she sat down and laid her little cheek on his shoulder.

"Well, Robin, if I get the shilling I will give you half; there, now, give me a kiss for that promise."

"Half will not do," said Robin, shaking her off.

"O you covetous boy! and you are ungrateful, too. I shall go and leave you now."

Robin's face turned very red, and in a minute large tears rolled slowly down his cheeks. "Effie," he said, sobbing, "you know how ill poor grandmother is, and how much she wants a little tea; well, I meant with that shilling" — he could not go on, but Effie knew what he intended, and in her heart be-

gan a great struggle. "Shall I give him my violets?" thought she; but again the work-box came into her mind, and she could not make the full sacrifice. "Well, I offered you half," said she, "and you could not expect more. If you will not take that you are unkind."

Robin did not answer, but walked slowly away, and Effie turned toward the village. She paused at the wall over which she had passed so happy in the morning. She sat down, no longer thinking with hope and pleasure of the shilling.

Turning her head she saw Robin leaning against the trunk of a mossy old tree; and she knew he was weeping, for she saw him put his little handkerchief to his eyes very often. Effie could not bear to see this, for

Robin was her favorite little friend. She went back quickly, and was soon at his side. She stooped down and kissed his cheek.

"Well, why do you tease me, Effie? leave me alone."

She did not answer, but put her violets into his hands.

"No, Effie, dear kind Effie! you are too good to me, and I have been so cross! No, I cannot take them."

"But you must and shall, Robin. Think of your poor grandmother, and all the good you will do her; and I — why, I do not want anything. So, Robin, go now quickly and show your violets to Dame Brown, and the shilling will be yours — come along, lazy boy;" and half laughing and half scolding, little Effie coaxed her playmate to the very door of the school.

Already the children were going in with their flowers, and the teacher, with her spectacles on, was counting the blossoms. "Here is Effie! come, Effie!" shouted many little voices; "we know you will have the most, you have been so long away; and there is Robin, too."

Dame Brown held out her hand for Effie's violets, and was surprised when Effie said, "I am very sorry, but mine are so few that it is useless showing them; but Robin has his hands full." Of all the good teacher had received his were the most in number and the finest, and therefore into his little hand the shilling was put.

Effie felt very happy, and as soon as they left the school she led him to the grocer's shop, and had the pleasure of seeing the money spent in little comforts for Robin's poor old grandmother.

Dame Brown soon heard the whole story from her old neighbor, Robin's grandmother, how the dear girl had given up her own pleasure for the good of others.

A few days after, Effie found a small

parcel on the table in her own little room, "For the generous girl," and on opening it there was a little work-box, with thimble, scissors, and cottons, and printed on the lid, "From an old friend." Guess her joy and delight! she ran to Robin, but he knew nothing of it, and then to the good dame.

The old lady examined the box very carefully, as if she knew no more about it than Robin did, but a smile on her kind face told all that Effie wished to know; so she threw her arms around her, exclaiming, "O, thank you! I will keep it for your sake! and I will be so good, and so careful, so tidy, so everything!"

"You deserve it, my dear little girl; so say no more about it, but remember, always, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

THE MOUSE THAT DID NOT LIKE ITS SUPPER.

A Little Mouse once found fault with its supper. It wanted what it could not have. "My child," said its old mother, "your supper is better than many little mice get; many little mice get nothing." This did not make it any better pleased or more thankful. "It did not care whether other little

mice went hungry or not," it said; "for *its* part it wanted cheese;" and because it could not have it, it ran up into a corner of the hole, turned its back, and pouted. Ah! I'm afraid there are other naughty children who do just so.

"Can't I go and get some *myself?*" cried the foolish little mouse. "My child," said the patient mother, "you know not the traps that are set in our

way. Have you forgot the great yellow cat, that ate up your cousins? Remember how well you are off, and let well enough alone."

No sooner was her back turned, however, than out came the little mouse from the corner, let itself down the hole, and scampered in the direction of the pantry. On its way it met a dashing young rat, and asked his advice. "Nothing dare, nothing have," said the rat. That advice pleased the little mouse, and it marched boldly on — it knew where, for it had often heard the old rats describe it.

At length it reached a secret opening into the pantry, and found it — stopped up. How angry the little mouse was! Heedless of danger, it began to gnaw, gnaw, gnaw, gnaw, without stopping to listen. A rich

nibble and a full meal were all it thought of. At last it contrived to squeeze in, as tickled as could be, and laughing in its sleeve at its cautious old mother. In this state of mind, just rounding a firkin, a couple of glassy eyes, a huge mouth, and monstrous whiskers confronted it. Where to go and what to do it knew not; but it took to its legs, got out of a door, then hid, then ran again, the yellow cat at its heels. Did she catch it? Some time after she was seen licking her lips; but she kept dark, answering no questions.

Its mother came in from her walk under the burdock leaves, and never saw her mouse again. "Ah! it is a sorry sign when children find fault with what is set before them," she said, and sighed.

Spring Voices.

"Caw, caw!" says the crow;
"Spring has come again, I know;
For, as sure as I am born,
There's a farmer planting corn.
I shall breakfast there, I trow,
Ere his corn begins to grow."

"Quack, quack!" says the duck;
"Was there ever such good luck?
Spring has cleared this pond of ice,
By her magic, in a trice,
Just as Goodman Drake and I
Its smooth surface wished to try."

"Cluck, cluck!" says the hen;
"Spring-time has come back again.
Every day an egg I lay
In the barn amongst the hay.
And I scratch the field all over,
Where the farmer sowed his clover."

"Bob-o-link-link-link,"
Stopping at the brook to drink,
Looks up at the broad, blue sky,
Thinks upon his nest close by,
Carols forth a joyous lay,
Spreads his wings and flies away.

Joys breathe, in the opening spring,
Forth from every living thing;
Birdies warble, brooklets leap,
Flowers waken from their sleep.
Let our hearts, these happy days,
Sing in grateful songs of praise.

DISOBEDIENCE

HENRY STANLEY was the son of pious parents. He was the oldest of a family of four boys, and was of a bold and daring disposition. One summer's morning, when he was twelve years old, his father came to him and said, "Henry, my boy, this is your birthday, and I am going to give you and your brothers holiday this afternoon; you may go into the fields, and take one or two of your friends with you."

The afternoon came, bright and beautiful. Before starting, Mr. Stanley

said, "Henry, you are older than any of your brothers or friends; you must, therefore, set them a good example. Don't go through farmer Clarke's field, for there is a dangerous bull there. Go round by the lane. *Now mind what I say.*"

Mr. Stanley then told Henry to take great care of Frank, his youngest brother. Frank was a beautiful child, about six years of age, with bright dark eyes and rosy cheeks, the pride and pet of the family.

When they had gone some distance, they came to farmer Clarke's field and the lane, which were close together. Here they stopped. "I wish we could only go through the field," said Henry, in a fretful, grumbling tone, "it's so much nearer. I'm sure the bull won't hurt us. I don't think father knew

we had Roughie with us, or I'm sure he wouldn't have forbidden us to go."

"O, do come along the lane," said his brother Alfred; "it's not much further; and if we go through the field we shall be disobeying father."

"Well," said Henry, "let me stop and look through the gate; I should like, at least, to see this bull."

Frank came to the gate with Roughie, and sat singing on the stile, tying flowers which he had gathered by the way on Roughie's neck. Presently he saw a bright butterfly, and knowing nothing about the bull, he slipped off the stile and ran into the field. Meanwhile Henry looked through the gate, but saw nothing of the bull. "It isn't here," said he; but he had hardly spoken the words before he heard a low

bellowing. Not in the least frightened, Henry climbed up the gate. At length he saw the bull approaching slowly, though he did not appear to see him. He then got down, not noticing Frank; he did not even look for him, as he thought he was with his brothers, who were walking up the lane. He next opened the gate, which was fastened very securely, saying, "Now for some fun." Thoughtless, wicked boy! Thus he went into the "transgressor's way!" We shall see directly how *hard* he found it.

He picked up some stones, and entering the field, he began to throw them at the bull. Directly the bull began pawing the ground, and bellowing with rage. Now Henry was frightened, and ran out of the field, but *forgetting to fasten the gate after him!*

His brothers were gone some distance, and were seated on the bank at the road-side waiting for him. Henry came up, panting for breath, and cried, "You cowards! You were *afraid* of the bull! Why —"

Here Alfred interrupted him, saying in a quick and hurried tone, "Where's Frankie? O Henry! why didn't you bring him with you!"

Henry stopped, and turned pale. "He must have come —" but here he was interrupted again by seeing the bull coming up the lane at full speed towards them. Henry shrieked with

terror, and tried to follow his brothers, who were running with all their might. But presently the bull overtook him, tossed him high up in the air, and left him lying senseless in the road. In this state he was picked up and carried home. The enraged animal continued on, and running at Frank, tossed him over the hedge into the next field.

It was a long time before Henry became conscious. When he first came to his senses, he found himself in a darkened room, with the curtains drawn closely round his bed. He raised himself on one side and listened. He heard some one sighing deeply. "Mother," he murmured softly. The curtains were opened. "Mother, what has happened?"

"You have been ill, my child," said his mother, quietly; and smoothing

his pillow, she laid his head down on it. Henry seemed confused and bewildered. At length he said, "Mother, have I been dreaming? What a fright I had! How strange it seems! But, mother, no! I've *not* been dreaming. I remember it all now. O, mother, tell me, *do* tell me where Frankie is!"

"In heaven, my child! dear little Frankie is a beautiful angel now."

"O, mother, I have *killed* him! Can you ever forgive me? I never can be happy any more. My brother! O, my brother!" No words can express the anguish of poor Henry's heart when he thought that his darling pet, his dear little Frankie, was in his tiny grave, brought there through *his* disobedience; and that he should never hear his merry laugh again when playing with old Roughie.